

23 – To be or not to be? Taxing the Swedish Aviation Sector Before and After Covid-19

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There have been several Swedish attempts to tax the aviation sector yet none of them were successful as they were considered to clash with EU law and/or international law. A new aviation tax was introduced in 2018 as a response to ongoing climate change and the need to reduce air travelling and co2 emissions. These two goals, reducing co2 and reducing air travelling, are not necessarily the same which may induce some confusion yet both are mentioned by the Swedish legislator in the preparatory works. The aviation tax was introduced by a government consisting of the Social Democrats and the Green Party. During the last general election (an unprecedented long process before a government could finally be elected with a majority vote), the aviation tax was very close to being permanently repealed as the Conservative Party strongly pushed for this. In fact, the tax was officially repealed in the budget that came into place before the question of the government itself was finally resolved. Later, when the Social Democrats and the Green Party managed to obtain a majority vote, they brought back the aviation tax.

Since the government, at the present time, is in a sensitive situation considering the support in the parliament, not to mention the ongoing pandemic and the effects it has had on the aviation industry it is of great interest to explore the future of it. Will it endure the great crisis, or will the Swedish Government decide to abolish it in order to incentivise the aviation sector post-COVID-19?

This paper aims to analyse the future of the Swedish aviation tax through a discursive analysis considering the legal, fiscal, and political context which in it subject to at present time.

Biographical note

Yvette Lind is an Assistant Professor in Tax Law at Copenhagen Business School. Doctorate in legal science, with a focus on income taxation and social insurance contributions in connection to cross-border working, from Umeå University (Sweden) in 2017. Followed by a Post-doc on fiscal state aid funded by the TOR/Skattenytt research foundation (Sweden) between 2017-2019. Scholarship holder at the Max Planck Institute for Tax Law and Public Finance (Munich) in 2019. Associate editor at the Nordic Journal of Law and Society (NJOLAS) in addition to guest editor for a variety of journals such as Florida Tax Review and Nordic Tax Journal. Areas of expertise primarily concern international taxation, state aid law, social insurance law, environmental taxes, and constitutional law.